

An evaluation of adherence to national patients' rights charter and patients' expectations in hospitals of Ardabil university of medical sciences, 2012

Background and Objectives: The issue of patients' rights has become the spotlight of attention over the two past decades as a result of patients' needs and vulnerability on one hand, and the increasing attention of international community on the other hand. Instructing the patients, their participation in decision-making and respecting their rights accelerate their recovery, decreases the hospitalization period, and altogether will bring about satisfaction of patients as well as the healthcare staff and the hospital. Therefore, we conducted this study to evaluate the status quo of the adherence level to the national patients' rights charter in hospitals affiliated with Ardabil University of Medical Sciences.

Methods and Materials: This is a descriptive-analytical cross-sectional study that was conducted on 200 patients hospitalized in hospitals of Ardabil University of Medical Sciences during the summer of 2012. Based on the ratio of the number of beds of each ward to the total number of beds of all the hospitals, the sample of patients was distributed among four hospitals of Ardebil University of Medical Sciences; Imam Khomeini, Fatemi, Alavi and Bu-Ali hospitals. Gathering of information was done at the time of patients' discharge. Data was gathered using a questionnaire and interview methods and analyzed through descriptive and analytical statistics methods, utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics 21 software.

Results: The results showed that the overall adherence level to the patients' rights charter in study population was 50.69%. Levels of adherence to the axes "Communication with patients", "Providing patients with information", "Privacy", "Access to good healthcare services", "Free choice of services and the right of refusal", "Right to have informed consent", "Access to health education", "Confidentiality of patients' information" and "Handling of complaints" were 68.5%, 24.5%, 56.37%, 54%, 19.12%, 61.16%, 64%, 46.16%, and 42.5%, respectively. Adherence to the charter did not show significant differences according to sex and location of residence. Adherence to the charter showed significant differences among age groups ($p=0.001$), groups based on marital status ($p=0.001$), and groups based on level of education ($p=0.028$).

Conclusion: Our results showed that adherence levels to the national patients' rights charter in hospitals of Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, similar to what is found in other cities of Iran are not satisfactory. Regarding high levels of expectations found in our study, we can conclude that national patients' rights charter is a reflection of our patients' expectations and comments. However, it seems requisite to increase patients' awareness of their own rights as well as healthcare providers' knowledge of patients' legal rights.

Keywords: right, patients' rights charter, patient